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REMARKS BY MR. WEBB

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INTERNATIONAL METEOROLOGICAL SATELLITE WORKSHOP

November 13, 1961

It is a pleasure to welcome you today on behalf of the National Aeronautics and Space Administration -- the civilian agency of the United States which is charged with responsibility for space research, exploration and practical applications. We are happy to have this opportunity to share with you the work we are doing jointly with the United States Weather Bureau in the field of meteorology and to receive your suggestions as to ways and means through which we can all benefit from future cooperative efforts. The presence here of representatives from almost 30 countries is evidence of the strong interest everywhere in the world in the practical benefits which all nations may now confidently expect to gain from broadly based efforts to apply satellites to weather research and forecasting.

In addition to welcoming the representatives from national weather services, I should like to welcome those who represent the organizations which have endorsed this meteorological workshop -- the World Meteorological Organization, the International Union of Geodesy and Geophysics, the International Committee on Space Research, the International Civil Aviation Organization, the U. S. National Academy of Sciences, and the American Meteorological Society.

The National Aeronautics and Space Administration has joined with the U. S. Weather Bureau to invite you here because we are convinced that the technology of meteorological satellites is nearing the point where it can be applied globally for practical research and operational forecasting.

Moreover, the TIROS experimental series of weather satellites will be replaced in about a year by the more useful and more nearly operational Nimbus series. Nimbus satellites, for instance, will be focused on the earth at all times from polar orbits. We hope and expect that it will then become possible within a reasonable time for every country which is prepared to do so to receive information directly from these satellites. I need not emphasize the value of such information, for it will offer to all nations for the first time an immediate and comprehensive view of the total cloud cover pattern in its own and neighboring geographic areas.

With such a prospect in view, and consistent with our national space policy, we believe that the technology, the processes, and the operational techniques we have developed for use of such information should be made available to the world's weather services at the earliest time. We are happy indeed that so many of you are here for this purpose, and we hope you will give us your suggestions as to how improvements can be made.

This workshop is but one instance, one example of the practical benefits which flow from the United States policy to share with other nations the scientific and technical knowledge we gain from our space program and to learn from them the knowledge they have acquired in this field. The same kind of factual and highly detailed presentations and discussions which you will have here have been organized also for those interested in our other programs. This was true of the information gained from the suborbital space flight of Astronaut Alan Shepard and it is true in connection with our preparatory activities for experiments with communications satellites, where joint working groups including a number of interested nations permit a full and early sharing of plans and information.

The United States has recognized from the beginning the interests of other nations in space and the extensive benefits to be gained by all from international cooperation. Our scientific experiments have been described in great detail in the literature and reported to the world scientific community in ways that are traditional with scientists.

In President Kennedy's first State of the Union address, just 10 days after he took office, he stated our intention as a nation to explore all possible areas of international cooperation "to invoke the wonders of science instead of its terrors." More recently the President has invited all nations to join with us in developing not only a weather prediction program, but also a communications satellite program, and in carrying out the multitude of experiments which are clearly necessary if mankind is to most effectively probe and benefit from an expanding knowledge of near-space, the moon and the distant planets.

For all these reasons, I am most happy to welcome you to this International Meteorological Satellite Workshop through which, working together, we can dedicate our efforts to an early realization of the use of space for peaceful and practical benefits for all mankind whose activities everywhere are so dependent on weather.